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SUBJECT: SOUTHEAST TURKEY PRESS SUMMARY FOR JUNE 10, 2005

This is the Southeastern Turkey press summary for June 10, 2005.

Please note that Turkish press reports often contain errors or exaggerations; AmConsulate Adana does not vouch for the accuracy of the reports summarized here.

POLITICAL, SECURITY, HUMAN RIGHTS

RADIKAL/ZAMAN / EVRENSEL: Leakage from BOTAS's (Petroleum Pipeline Corporation) Batman-Yumurtalik Pipeline that occurred in April (see press summary 4/18 and 4/20) had reportedly polluted sections of land in the area. BOTAS plan to clean a 200-truck amount of earth within one year, and also announced that it was examining the complaints of the villagers on site and would compensate for the losses of the villagers soon.

ZAMAN: A professor of the Sociology department at the Middle East Technical University claims that 42,976 people have died in Turkey as a result of terror related activities between 1979-2004. Terrorist activities, he said, began after the adoption of the 1961 Constitution and intensified between 1971-1980. After providing some other figures, the professor reported that Turkey has spent a total of 100-120 billion USD to fight terrorism, a figure equal to the total debt of Turkey.

CUMHURIYET/YENI SAFAK: Solidarity Association for the Mothers of the Martyrs filed a complaint against the terrorist organisation PKK's leader, Abdullah Ocalan, for "attempting to separate certain territory of the state in order to eliminate the state's rule there."

OZGUR GUNDEM: An investigation has reportedly been opened in Tunceli against Tunceli Mayor Songul Erol Abdil and other DEHAP members on the grounds that these people celebrated an event on April 4 and sliced a cake that allegedly featured a flag related to "democratic confederalism." A DEHAP member said that they were questioned (by unspecified person/authority) about the purpose of the festivity and whether they ate the cake or not.

OZGUR GUNDEM: One of the leaders of the terrorist organisation PKK, Murat Karayilan, reportedly suggested that the Ocalan retrial issue be turned into a case that aims to solve the Kurdish issue. Karayilan claims that the PKK was ready to form a Kurdish-Turkish alliance to solve the issue and bring Kurds and Turks together to promote solidarity among people.

OZGUR GUNDEM: The newly elected chairperson of Van's Goc-Der (Immigrants' Social Solidarity and Culture Association), Caroline Camgoz, is reportedly of Armenian origin and says her family was directly affected by events of 1915.

OZGUR GUNDEM: Tension persists in the Municipality of Van among AKP and SHP members of the municipality assembly (see press summary 06/08), despite the fact that AKP officials reportedly visited the SHP members at their homes to apologize. Mayor Burhan Yenigun dismissed the SHP members' corruption allegations in 2004 Municipality tenders.

EVRENSEL: The paper reports that Aytac Durak's remarks yesterday about Incirlik Airbase were in response to a question asked by Greenpeace members visiting him (see press summary 06/09).

EVRENSEL/OZGUR GUNDEM: Soldiers raided a village in Cukurca district of Hakkari (reportedly opening fire with cannons in the operation) and villagers escaped to caves in the region. Houses of those who fled were reportedly searched and villagers' identities were checked. Villagers brought this issue and their complaints to the Cukurca Subgovernor.

RADIKAL/OZGUR GUNDEM: Diyarbakir's Human Rights Association announced that human rights violations in eastern and southeastern Turkey have increased extraordinarily in the last three months. (Ozgur Gundem claims that areas where violations have increased include alleged extrajudicial killings, mistreatment, illegal detentions.) At the same time, the Association noted a decrease in the occurrence of torture incidences.

YENI SAFAK: President of the Turkish Parliament, Bulent Arinc, currently attending the Ararat Mountain Culture and Arts Festival, paid a visit to Dogubeyazit Subgovernor Rauf Ulusoy and Dogubeyazit Mayor Mukaddes Kubilay. Arinc said during his visit, "It is an honor and a pleasure to visit a Mayor from DEHAP...Ethnical difference is a richness of a society."

REID